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TEGA SPORTS

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2015

LET'S GO, GET DOWN, GET DIRTY

Q&A: THE 'FINA SISU MESTISU'
BE SMART ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS
KNOW YOUR FEDERATION: CANOE
VICTORIA CHENTSOVA'S LAST HURRAH
GENESIS CUP STRIVES FOR GODLY SPORTS BEHAVIOR
JERRY TAN: BUILDING A HEALTHIER CNMI ONE SPORT AT A TIME

SPORTS CALENDAR

JULY

2015 Little League Asia Pacific-Middle East Regional Tournament: The CNMI plays host to this annual event, which is a World Series qualifier for the Junior, Senior, and Big League divisions.

XV Pacific Games: The quadrennial event brings together more than 2,000 athletes and officials, including those from the CNMI, to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea for a 15-day competition in 28 sports.

31st Saipan International Fishing Tournament: Watch the island's fishermen and other anglers from Guam, Tinian, and Rota bring in their prized catch. The crew with the heaviest single catch marlin gets to rule the tournament, while the team that will break the 942-lb record will bring home $10,000.

AUGUST

16th FINA World Championships: The world's best and fastest swimmers will plunge into the pool in Kazan, Russia, and will be joined by four CNMI swimmers.

2015 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships: The CNMI-led North Pacific team will battle the East and West squads' representatives in singles and doubles competitions in four age groups.

20th Tournament of Champions: The CNMI's biggest annual golf tournament will be celebrating two decades of exciting competitions among local and off-island players.

SEPTEMBER

2015 NMIFA Spring Youth Football League: The CNMI's young strikers will return to the pitch and fight for four divisions crowns.

Coalition of Private School Sports Association Volleyball League: Indoor volleyball action begins, as private school teams on Saipan gun for the middle school championships.

2015 BANMI Youth League: This age group basketball competition will be the center of attraction at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

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Dashing off a prayer before a game is par for the course in any sport, with teams huddling in their respective corners for a short but fervent tête-à-tête with God to ask for His blessings for a win. In individual tournaments you'd see some athletes make a furtive sign of the cross before stepping inside the court. Boxer Manny Pacquiao would famously kneel in his corner of the ring and commune with the Lord before standing up and knocking the teeth out of his opponents.

But to get both opposing teams to bow their heads together in prayer and supplicate God for a good game is something unique, a remarkable sight that has become a trademark for the newly revived Genesis Cup. The brainchild of Filipino Community Church pastor Noel Puno, the competition is church-based, with players coming from churches affiliated with the Association of Filipino Pastors on Saipan. Which means there is no swearing or cursing, hardly any complaints for referees' calls, and a "Yes to Jesus, No to Drugs" slogan. In fact, for some players, the Genesis Cup is not so much a basketball competition but a form of fellowship with other Christians.

This is somewhat parallel to the driving force behind the Clericus Cup, a two-month-long soccer competition at the Vatican that is modeled after the World Cup. More than 350 priests, deacons, and seminarians from the Vatican play in this annual event, which has grown from a series of scrimmages into a regulation 11-on-11 tournament that has drawn attention from FIFA, the sport's world governing body, and praise from UEFA, European soccer's ruling organization.

According to the story by Kevin Baxter of the *Los Angeles Times,* the players bless themselves before taking the field, both teams meet at the center circle for a pregame prayer, and there are no requests for favorable results. As the organizers put it, the Clericus Cup is more about camaraderie and personal growth than it is about winning. All I can say is "Amen to that!"

This edition of TAGA *Sports* is the penultimate edition before our fifth anniversary issue, which will come out in October this year. I personally can't believe that we'd last this long, yet it is the support of our faithful readers and advertisers who have made all these possible. We would love to hear from you, be it letters to the editor, suggestions for future stories, athletes that you'd like to see on these pages, or even complaints about our grammatical errors and typos. Just email them to editor@saipantribune.com and we'd be sure to consider them all.

Welcome and we hope you enjoy reading this latest edition of TAGA *Sports*!

JAYVEE VALLEJERA
editor@saipantribune.com
Managing Editor

COVER ART

A Let's Go Polaris UTV makes a huge splash in one of the muddy trails.

Photography by
ROSELYN MONROYO

TAGA SPORTS

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WRITERS' BLOC

KAISAANDERSON

Kaisa is a Registered Dietitian for PSS Food and Nutrition Services. She is still waiting for the students of the CNMI to eat their vegetables at school. She has loved this year's season of mangoes and has yet to try all of the different varieties Saipan has to offer.

ROSELYNMONROYO

While doing the Q&A feature on L.J. Castro, Roselyn remembered how she used to substitute as "ring announcer" when her childhood friends had wrestling matches on an old mattress. To start the fight, she imitated Michael Buffer's trademark catch phrase "Let's get ready to rumble."

JONPEREZ

Jon, with his South Asian looks, was once mistaken for a member of India's national chess team while covering a tournament organized by Asia's first Grandmaster Eugene Torre back in the Philippines.

MARKRABAGO

Mark suited up for Jeremiah in the recent Genesis Cup. He averaged in double figures and made at least three triples a game in the regular season before delivering a dud of a performance in their playoff game against Isaiah when he wound up with only 9 points (1-for-infinity from beyond the arc).

Email letters to the editor to editor@saipantribune.com or mail to PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan MP 96950. Submissions to TAGA Sports must include the writer's name, village address (no P.O. boxes), and daytime phone or mobile number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity and may be published or used in any medium. All submissions become the property of the publication and will not be returned.

supplement smarts: knowing your nutrition supplements

KAISA ANDERSON, RD
Contributing Writer

I am a skeptic. I can't help it. I can't help but be skeptical when someone recommends, suggests, or asks for information on nutrition supplements. I have a hard time believing they will improve your physique and performance by a large margin. Especially with how they are loosely regulated by the FDA, along with so many conflicting studies and information when it comes to nutrition supplements. A consumer can be easily misguided and confused. I know I was. However, I really hadn't taken time to research all the nutrition supplements that are popular on the market, maybe I have been wrong all along. So I felt inclined for this article to truly learn as much as I could to best inform you on the matter of nutrition supplements and their health claims. You may find you learn a lot about some of the following popular nutrition supplements for athletes and body builders alike:

CREATINE

What is it? Creatine is not a protein, but made in the liver from bits and pieces of amino acids. Amino acids are building blocks used to create proteins; proteins help build muscle, skin, organs, fingernails, etc.

Health Claims: Creatine has been advertised to increase lean body mass and cell size, speed up post-workout recovery, increase glycogen storage for extra energy, and increase high-intensity muscle performance.

The Truth: Most studies have found creatine supplementation may improve lean body mass up to 20 to 50 percent for those engaged in high intensity, short endurance exercises. So creatine may be beneficial to take if you are an athlete into sprinting or weight lifting. Do keep in mind, your body does create creatine in your liver, so if you choose to supplement, the need for large amounts of supplementation is not necessary.

ZMA

What is it? ZMA is a new product brought to my attention; it's a combination of zinc aspartate (aspartate is an amino acid), magnesium aspartate, and Vitamin B6.

Health Claims: ZMA advertises the zinc it contains will improve the immune system, the magnesium improves sleep regime and muscle health, and the Vitamin B6 is for increased energy. They also advertise their product is more effective for zinc and magnesium as they attach the amino acid aspartate to them, making it more effectively utilized. So they claim.

The Truth: The important thing to know is zinc has only shown to improve immunity when there has been a deficiency found in someone's blood levels. Honestly, zinc has a lot of other and better things to do, if your zinc levels are normal. As far as magnesium affects muscle health, studies have shown magnesium pyruvate can be possibly effective in athletic performance; great right? But don't forget, ZMA contains magnesium aspartate, not the same thing as magnesium pyruvate, and all other research on magnesium aspartate is inconclusive. In addition, magnesium improving sleep is also inconclusive as most studies contradict each other. Lastly, for the many different uses for Vitamin B6 for health conditions, energy boosting is not one of them. Vitamin B6 itself does not break down chemically to create energy to supply to your muscles, so don't count on it.

GLUTAMINE

What is it? Glutamine is one of the 20 amino acids your body needs to make proteins. If you can't remember what amino acids are, refer to creatine.

Health Claims: Glutamine is believed to slow muscle breakdown, improve immunity, and increase growth hormone, which encourages purchases from body building athletes for muscle growth.

The Truth: Overall there are conflicting studies for athletic performance. Taking glutamine by mouth in pill form does not seem to improve performance. It does help muscle

repair only if you are deficient and the body is incapable of producing glutamine on its own. Most athletes and healthy adults do not fall under this category. It may improve your immune system if you have been under severe trauma or stress such as a car accident, surgery, severe burns, or HIV.

BRANCHED CHAIN AMINO ACIDS (BCAA)

What is it? Branched chain amino acids are usually a combination of the amino acids leucine, isoleucine, and valine.

Health Claims: Branched chain amino acids are marketed to keep muscles fueled and help them to recover after a workout.

The Truth: It is true the amino acid combination of leucine, isoleucine, and valine all encourage the creation of proteins and help monitor protein metabolism. Studies have shown they may help your muscles recover and keep muscles from rapid breakdown. Overall, it is recognized that it helps your muscles recover; however, there is not enough scientific evidence to show BCAAs help improve your athletic performance.

BETA ALANINE

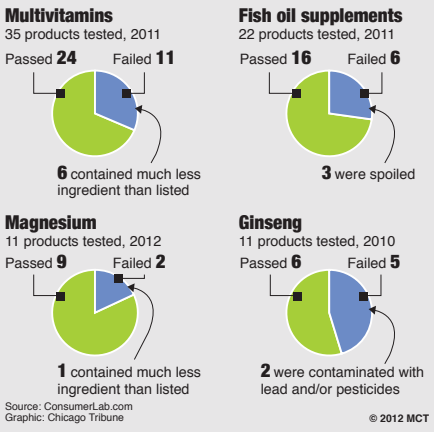
What is it? Beta-alanine is another amino acid of the 20 amino acids, but its chemical structure is a bit twisted…to put it simply.

Health Claims: Beta-alanine enhances performance by increasing carnosine. In turn carnosine (another chemical compound, but really just more scientific jargon for you to be confused by) is said to delay lactic acid build up, hence delaying muscle fatigue and failure

The Truth: Studies have positively shown beta alanine has moderately improved physical performance. Most research was done using one product (CarnoSyn). This is important to note, as when one product is being tested repeatedly, it can also mean the research is being funded by the company of the specific product or brand that is also selling it. More research could be conducted on this product.

Supplement testing

ConsumerLab.com, an independent testing organization, has analyzed popular dietary supplements for about a dozen years. The group says it has found a significant problem with about 1 in 4 products.



Source: ConsumerLab.com
Graphic: Chicago Tribune

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After all that scientific jargon your head may be spinning and you are probably ready for a nap. The reality of the matter is nutrition supplements are loosely regulated and monitored by the Food and Drug Administration because of the Dietary Supplements Health and Education Act (DSHEA) passed in 1994. I won't bore you with the details of DSHEA, but I will let you know it pulls power away from the FDA to regulate nutrition supplements that are placed on the shelves, creates loopholes for nutrition supplement companies to place products in the market whether they are proven safe or not, and requires the FDA to jump over many hurdles to pull potentially harmful products making false health claims off the shelf.

Overall consumers need to be "supplement smart" and realize most supplements are not tested or regulated, not all health claims are true, and the people who typically buy supplements are not nutritionally deficient, making it unnecessary to take them. I simply wish consumers educate themselves on what they are consuming. Ask your doctor or registered dietitian about a supplement before taking it. For this article I did a lot of research and I was still unable to get all the exact answers I was seeking. However, I can say I did lose some of my skepticism on nutrition supplements, or at least I know I need to be "supplement smart" before I judge. Stay smart!

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The 'Fina Sisu Mestisu'

ROSELYNMONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

Luis John Castro or L.J. is not a bemedalled athlete nor a seasoned coach but he is still a familiar face in the sports community, having hosted various tournaments on Saipan. He emcees for fishing derbies and triathlon and running races but is best known for his work on the octagon cage during Trench Tech's Mixed Martial Arts fights.

TAGA *Sports* talked to the "Fina Sisu Mestisu" to find out how he does his gigs inside the eight sides.

Why are you called "The Fina Sisu Mestisu?"

It's kind of a long story. When I was doing the traffic report for Power 99, I was thinking of a good transition into the commercials. So I was always ending the report with the words, "You're on the go with the Fina Sisu Mestisu!" But it didn't really catch on until Brad Ruszala one time at a Battle of the Bands show he was hosting, and I was judging, introduced me as "The Fina Sisu Mestisu" L.J. Castro.

Nowadays, almost everyone calls me that, even the other half, who I affectionately call "Mestisa" in return. LOL.

How did you end up hosting MMA events for Trench Tech?

That's another long story too. LOL. I remember back in '06 when the Micronesian Games were held here, I spoke to Cuki about maybe doing an event or two for Trench Tech. He was open to the idea, but it took a while to get to that. Fast forward to 2007, I accidentally called Mari (Cuki's wife), and after saying who I was, Mari asked someone if they called my number. It turned out that person was Cuki. Once he found out it was me on the other line, he immediately took the phone and we had a good conversation, talked about me doing the next event on the calendar that year, and the rest is history. After that, I made my debut at Rites of Passage III.

Are you really an MMA fan? Have you tried doing one MMA fight?

Yes I am. I do remember watching UFC videos when I was younger, back in the days when there were literally no rules on the octagon. But aside from MMA, I like the usual sports: baseball, basketball, and football. I also watch boxing when I can and a lot of pro wrestling. I've sparred a few times with the fighters, just primarily in training. Let's just say I need MORE training. I got a great respect for what these guys are doing because it takes a lot of practice and dedication to get to the level they're at. It's not something that you just do as you please. You have to work at it to be the best. Just ask Frank "The Crank."

How do you prepare for fight night? Any rituals?

Well, the first thing I usually try to prepare is how to open the night. I always try to give a different intro every time I open a Trench Tech event, so I use the last night before the show to think of what exactly to say, and make sure that I don't forget to say it. Another

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thing I do right before I go through the curtain, and Rose, you've seen this a few times up in the control room of the World Resort, is that last-minute psych up during the playing of the anthems—jumping around to get the blood flowing. It helps to get me into the zone of doing what I have to do for the night.

There are a few things I usually always wear to the ring for fights. One is my sinahi (island jewelry). I almost never do a show without it, whether it's an MMA event or otherwise. The other objects I have with me are two identical-looking armbands that have crosses on them. I wear one on my right wrist (my mic-holding hand) and one on my left forearm.

The one on my right wrist I use as a way of giving honor to God for the talents and experiences I've been blessed to be given; it's like wearing a crucifix but just not around my neck. The one on my left, I kind of stole the idea from Michael Jackson, but I wear it as a way of giving tribute to the ones I hold dear that have passed on, but are still present in spirit. They are the people who helped shape who I am now. It's my way of carrying them with me when I go to do my thing.

The biggest booboo you did while announcing in an MMA event? How did you get away with it?

Oh, no one's perfect, me included. I guess the biggest mistake I've done—and there have been a lot—would be either reading the wrong information on my scorecards, or worse, introducing a fighter with the wrong name. But all good MCs know how to think on their feet, so usually I'll just take it in stride, flash a smile, and just roll along. You can't avoid making mistakes, but you can always find ways to fix them.

The fighter you think has the best nickname? How about the not-so-good one?

Tough question, for real. Probably the most creative nicknames I've ever come across was both Cuki's nicknames: "The Flying Cockroach" and "The Janitor." Shane's nickname ranks high up there too, Frank's, Rick "2 Slick" San Nicolas, Mylo "BamBam" Lassiter, "Shiska" Bob Alvarez, Fasi "Quickdraw" Jesse, just to name a few. It's really hard to think who has the most creative one, because a lot of the fighters have some monikers that you can't help but nod your head every time you hear them being introduced. As for those who doesn't have a good nickname, I plead the Fifth. LOL. Sorry, *lai*, I don't want to get beat up by mentioning any names.

Your signature line?

Plain and simple. "IT'S GERA TIME." There's another one I use during Rites of Passage events, "Let the Rites begin!" which I say at the beginning of the first fight. But the first seems to be the one that's endured. I've heard little kids, adults, and even old guys shout it out when I walk into a gathering, or when I enter a room. It's a little freaky at times, but flattering also.

The best part of your job? Have you ever thought of becoming a ring announcer?

Probably, it's the atmosphere I work in during the events. You never know what you're going to get from both the fighters and the crowd, so it always pushes you to do your best. And when they react to whatever you say, they hang on to every word that comes out of your mouth, that's the best part. Did I ever think this was something I'd be known for, that I'd be doing? No. I wondered at times how would it feel to be a ring announcer. Heck, I'd imitate wrestling ring announcers many times, but never thought I'd do it myself. But I'm glad I'm doing it now.

Your dream gig?

Probably, a realistic dream gig would be to be the ring announcer at an event that Cuki fights in, just because he's the only fighter I haven't called into combat yet. But he says he's retired. I don't know if it'll ever happen. But there's a handful. I'd love to do a PXC event, if they ever asked me. Or probably, maybe be considered in the event for Bruce Buffer, when he retires. I mean they compare me to him all the time. LOL.

Or maybe ring announce at a Wrestlemania? I've always been a big WWE fan, so that's probably the ultimate dream gig for me. You never know. But for now, I'm enjoying being the ring announcer for Trench Tech. And I'm definitely looking forward to the next time that it's GERA TIME. I'll see you inside the eight sides, *gachongs*!

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GENESIS CUP

The league that prohibits swearing and awards points for good behavior

MARK
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

The Genesis Cup underwent a major makeover this season—a change that resulted in an unqualified success for the faith-based basketball league, which began in 2008.

The league is the brainchild of Filipino Community Church pastor Noel Puno, who said for the 2015 season organizers decided to change the makeup of the league from an "open type" competition into a church-based one, with players coming from churches affiliated with the Association of Filipino Pastors on Saipan.

"There was a gap of seven years from the last GenCup in 2008. The first GenCup conferences were open type (unrestricted) basketball leagues supported by some businesses on the island. The idea of reviving GenCup for AFPS came out when we decided to include sports activities in our calendar. Its main goal is for Christian brotherhood games, a Christian camaraderie, for us to be able to know people that belong to AFPS churches, and to have a good time with our brethren."

Puno said the objectives of the 2015 Christian Churches Inter-Color Basketball League were many-fold.

"The aim of this league is to promote camaraderie, to help young people and adults in the direction of the true values of life. We believe that the most important thing is to show them the spirit of

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kindness, friendship, and love that they may be able to experience and develop as a godly habit," he said.

The 2015 Genesis Cup also adopted a "Yes to Jesus, No to Drugs" slogan, which underlines the importance of helping the community through this type of fellowship and for church members to be physically fit and abstain from unhealthy activities.

"Comparatively it is also a means of having fun and creating a healthy lifestyle in the CNMI and for them to be more useful and responsible not only in the community but to their own family as well. Our other aim is to uplift the moral values of every individual who is working and living here on Saipan."

In all, 98 players from 12 AFPS churches—Jesus Is Lord, Cornerstone Christian Church, Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan Community Church, Filipino Community Church, Life in the Son, Upper Room International Ministry, Marianas Christian Church, Victorious Christian Church, Saipan Bible Fellowship, Christian Bible Fellowship, and Marianas Bible Fellowship Center—joined the competition.

"Games were played like the normal basketball leagues, but there were some rules that we adopted that are only applicable to Christian brethren. We hardly heard about a player complaining a call. We just played for fun. Of course it is a competition but we [officials] see to it that everything is under control."

It's also one of the only sports competitions on island where cursing and swearing are strictly prohibited, which was not only a welcome development for players but also for referees and those watching the games.

Compared to the four Genesis Cup competitions in the past, the 2015 edition of the league was the most successful, Puno said without hesitation.

"All GenCup leagues in the past were all successful. However, this year was the most successful because of the support that we received from the AFPS churches.

The league was completed smoothly. We achieved our goal of knowing our brethren. Before I didn't even know that these people who I always meet on the streets are Christians," said Puno, who suited up for Isaiah in the recent Genesis Cup.

Puno's teammate, Frank Dalusung, couldn't agree more with the former's glowing assessment. The Grace Christian Assembly member said overall he believes the competition was "100 percent successful" not only for what happened on the court but also off it.

He said he used to run into people around Saipan without knowing if they shared the same faith. Thanks to the Genesis Cup he now sees a lot of his brethren on island and it's become commonplace to greet one another.

MBFC's Jing Bordon, who suited up for Samuel, said the Genesis Cup was more than just basketball; it was in reality a form of fellowship.

"It's a brotherhood league. It's not about how good you are in playing basketball, but it's how good your character is when playing basketball," said Bordon, who works as a production staff of KSPN.

Dalusung was also impressed with the transformation of known hothead basketball players once they suited up for the Genesis Cup.

"This league is not looking at skill level but attitude is given more importance. Character is more important," he said.

That showed in the trophies the Genesis Cup bestowed during the awards ceremony after the finals between Caleb and Daniel, which was won by the former. There was the "Fruit of the Holy Spirit Award," "Most Cheerful Player Award," Most Submissive Player Award," and Most Self-Tempered Player Award," to name a few.

"Our awards were different from a typical basketball league. Our awards are character awards based on how the player played the game. It was not based the basketball knowledge/ability of the player but based on how the players interacted with the other players and officials," said Puno.

Pastor Roger Abe of Saipan Community Church attested to the league's uniqueness and even coined a term for it.

"It's 'Microwave Teamwork' as players get to compete on a scheduled game without any team practice. That's unique," he said. Abe played for Joshua. TS

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JON PEREZ
TAGA Sports Staff Writer

The Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation was formed in 2012 after the last Micro Cup that Saipan hosted in the same year where one representative from each of the active canoe clubs on the island sits on the board.

Richard Sikkel, who represents the Saipan Outrigger Canoe Club on the NMNPSF board, said they decided to form the federation in order to have one umbrella organization that promotes the paddle sports culture.

"So we could also represent the interest of all paddling sports in the Northern Marianas Sports Association and could be a catalyst in organizing local races," said Sikkel, who is also the principal at Brilliant Star School on Navy Hill.

He said the NMNPSF oversees and organizes all local canoe races, including the Marianas Interschool Sports Organization and other international events that are held on Saipan.

Sikkel said NMNPSF also selects and sanctions the members of the national outrigger team and the coaches that would represent Saipan in off-island events such as the Micronesian Games, Pacific Games, and the Pacific Mini Games.

"At the moment we have a team that is training for the Pacific Games next month. But it is still unsure if they can make it there due to travel difficulties," added Sikkel, who started paddling when he moved to Saipan in 2002.

"Paddling is a great way to experience the water and be part of a team. To relax after a long day of work."

Sikkel said the federation also organizes MISO races, which just finished its 2014-2015 season last May 23. "The federation is also working on a race schedule for the rest of the year as a lead up to the Micro Cup, which Saipan would host from Oct. 24 to 25."

The Micro Cup is an international club race where hosting rotates among the CNMI, Guam, and Palau.

An estimated 150 active paddlers are spread out in the active clubs like SOCC, Holokalani, Marianas Outrigger Canoe, Marianas Pacific Paddlers, and the Saipan Paddling Club. More members paddle on and off.

"There are all kinds of levels of paddlers on island. From paddlers who paddle and chat, those who stop for a snorkel, and the hardcore competitive ones that usually train hard for exercise and prepare for local and international races," Sikkel said.

The federation is also willing to welcome those interested and curious to try the sport of outrigger canoe as clubs are always on the lookout for new members. Most clubs meet at Kilili Beach at 5pm.

"I think at the moment the most common paddling days are Tuesdays, Thursdays, and the weekend. Most clubs are more than happy to take in first-time paddlers that show up on practice days," said Sikkel.

Although most of the practice takes place inside the lagoon, knowing how to swim always come in handy.

"The lagoon is relatively shallow and calm; however, the canoes can flip and like all water sports, there's a good chance you'll get wet."

"The more experienced crews also go outside the reef to practice in rougher conditions. If one doesn't know how to swim, be sure to notify the coach or steersperson and a personal flotation device is highly recommended."

Sikkel said showing up at the beach before the start of practice and talking to any member of a canoe club is one way to touch base with them.

"They can also try to find different canoe clubs online. And if that doesn't work, they can always email me at saipanoutrigger@gmail.com and I will put them in contact with one of the canoe clubs."

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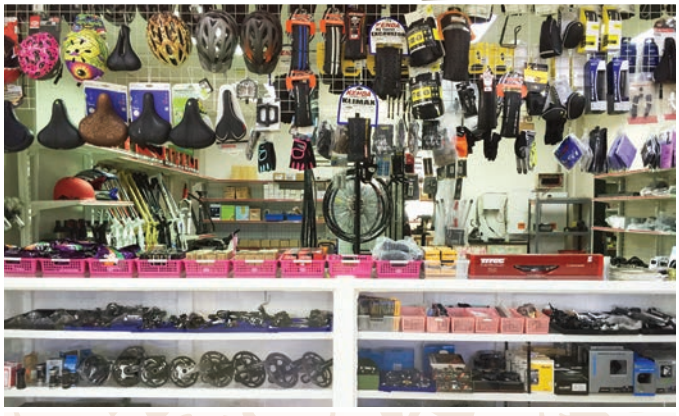

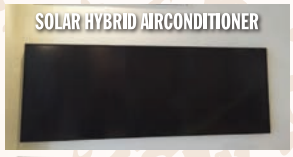

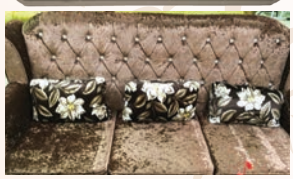

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building a healthier cnmi one sport at a time

ROSELYNMONROYO
TAGA Sports Staff Writer

About 10 months ago, Kanoa Football Club goalie Amanda Agulto tipped the scales at 280 lbs.

In May, during Jerry Tan's birthday celebration marked by a fun run, a different Agulto showed up to volunteer for the early morning race. She was 110 lbs lighter, with a much better grip on her personal health.

Tales like hers are what motivate Jerry Tan to be a staunch supporter of CNMI sports.

"I grew up playing and loving sports. Before, I love the competitive and fun sides of sports, but today it's more than that. Today, I recognize the big impact of sports on our health, especially among our children," Tan said.

"We must admit that in Micronesia, we have a lot of unhealthy and sick people and we can avoid these conditions by helping build a healthier young generation. People

who learn sports at a young age and continue to play as an adult are likely to have a healthier, more enjoyable, and longer life. The more sports I lead or support, the more kids I will influence to get involved in sports and live a more active lifestyle."

Tan is president of the Saipan Bowling Association, Northern Marianas Badminton Association, and Northern Mariana Island Football Association and backs a host of other sports in the Commonwealth.

Under his leadership, both SBA and NMBA hold various tournaments that cater to its young and old members. NMBA even hosts summer camps for U8 to U18 age groups and is in the process of working with the Public School System and the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization on having a regular badminton tournament for high school students.

NMIFA, however, is undoubtedly the most successful—in terms of attracting member- →

ship—among the three groups that Tan handles. From just about 100 players when the association was established in 2005, membership is now around 1,600 and majority of them are in the youth age group. Players compete for two seasons in a year besides other special tournaments, while camps and other grassroots programs are being implemented regularly.

"The growth of bowling and badminton is limited because of the playing venue. They have to be played in an indoor facility and we all know we have limited ones. Unlike in soccer, you can play in a lot of places and you can always tailor or adjust the rules and regulations based on the needs of a specific age group so it is easier for NMIFA to attract more players," said Tan, who has also brought the sports culture to his Tan Holdings employees by hosting different company competitions.

Inspiration and support group

Since Tan made known his special interest in football, it was not surprising to learn that he draws his leadership inspiration from one of the most admired men in the football world—Sir Alex Ferguson, the former manager of Manchester United.

"I and my brother Raymond have looked up to Sir Alex. We study him, are inspired by him, and learn from him. He was the manager of Manchester United for nearly 27 years. Most managers from big football teams do not last more than three years, no matter how good they are. But Sir Alex handled the team for about 27 years. We admire that longevity as far as managing a very popular club is concerned," Tan said.

Sir Alex called the shots for Manchester United from November 1986 to May 8, 2013.

"Only a manager like Sir Alex could take that big responsibility for a long period of time. He is disciplined and knew how to strategize and assemble a team that can work together, even though the squad has a bunch of superstars. Those characteristics are what I am trying to learn and apply when leading the different sports groups in the CNMI and our company," the Tan Holdings president said.

Tan acknowledges the difficulty of wearing many hats but, with good people surrounding him, he is able to pull it through.

"Besides leading the three sports groups I also have a big responsibility handling our businesses and serving as an official of [the Marianas Visitors Authority] and other local associations. I have a lot of workload but I am very lucky that through the years I am surrounded with good people who help me get the job done. Much credit goes to them," he said.

"I try my best to lead, but I must admit a lot of work are being done and executed by the people who are working with me, be it on the sports or business side," Tan added.

Olympic dream

Tan has watched the Commonwealth compete in different regional and international sports tournaments but there is one that remains elusive for the islands' athletes—the Olympic Games.

"I don't know if I will call it a goal or dream, but one day I will be very proud to see an athlete from any sport who will represent the CNMI in the Olympic Games," Tan said.

The CNMI is one of the few countries that is not part of the Olympic family because of its political affiliation with the United States. Exclusion from the powerful Olympic group not only denies the Commonwealth athletes a rare chance to compete in the quadrennial meet, but also funding and other resources that could help athletes and officials develop their skills and be at the same level as their counterparts in the region.

Moves had been made in the past to seek membership in the Olympic family, to no avail. This year, Tan said that necessary steps are again being carefully taken to help realize the CNMI's Olympic dream.

While waiting and working for the CNMI's inclusion to the elite group, Tan encourages athletes to keep playing and vows to continue assisting the CNMI sports community.

"It will make me happy to see young kids running, smiling, and sweating while playing the sport they love. That's the best form of gratitude I could receive for being a sports supporter."

LET'S GO, get down, and dirty...

JON PEREZ
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

It all started with the idea of giving local and foreign tourists alike a different way of seeing Saipan.

Let's Go! Tour Company, which opened shop in December 2014, lets its clients experience the adventure of riding a Utility Task Vehicle while exploring the island's many hidden treasures.

For first-time rider Dennis Chan, it was an experience in sheer, yet controlled, power. "By that I mean the UTVs we rollicked through Mt. Tapochao's terrain on were a testament to how safe, first-class, and fun outdoor vehicles could be," he said.

He was lucky enough to have Let's Go! general manager Ed Arriola as his tour guide the first time he tried the off-road adventure.

"He was kind enough to ask our permission before we revved through any large puddles. Of course, we always chose to get wet. He was also sure that we were comfortable and most importantly safe, instructing us on the standard equipment and driving requirements for the trip."

"Also notable was the peaceful bamboo forest we rode through, and how I'd never seen it before. That, I think, is one of the main draws of the Let's Go tour. It gets you to hard-to-access spots on island that are rarely touched," Chan said. ➜

New activity

The company is the brainchild of Jerry Tan, who wanted to come up with a new activity for tourists and island residents alike, and Ivan Quichocho, who suggested the idea of Polaris off-road vehicles. After more than two years of research and analyses through the help of the Marianas Visitors Authority and with their own discussion with tourists who visit the CNMI, Let's Go took the bold leap from the drawing board to reality.

"The ascent in the arrival of Chinese tourists in the CNMI started in 2013. We've done a lot of exit surveys and we found out that tourists—whether Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, or Russians—wanted three things: More nightlife, more activity, and culture," said Arriola.

He said Quichocho and Tan Holdings executive Alex Sablan did their research by visiting places like the former U.S. Air Force base in Angeles City, Pampanga province in the Philippines, Palau, California, and Las Vegas to make sure if it is possible to open an off-road adventure activity here on Saipan.

Though Let's Go! is still in its infancy, Arriola said reception and reviews have been good. "Tour agencies, even other companies that offer water sports, welcomed the idea since it brings something new to the host of activities that you can experience on Saipan."

"We're not here just to make a profit for Let's Go! We're just stamping ourselves as another product that Saipan offers."

Arriola is backed by six well-trained staff: Luis "Kanooki" Camacho, Justin "Juice" Casama, Jeffrey "El Jefe" Che, Dan "Lil' Joker" Sanchez, Roman "Romeo" Tudela, and Wang "Wangsta" Yue, who are the tour guides. Tudela also act as the lead mechanic while Wang doubles as a China sales agent.

Arriola said the vehicles, called Polaris, are manufactured in Michigan and are the same ones the U.S. military uses. "The only difference is the ones used by the military are built with more armor and a machine gun is mounted on top. But the general suspension, mechanics, and all the other features are basically the same."

Thrilling ride

Frauleine Michelle Villanueva had just been on island for a few days when she got to try a Let's Go adventure—a trek up Mt. Tapochao. She knew it would be fun but what she didn't expect was for it to be an exuberant, thrilling experience.

"It was a wild ride! I wasn't able to drive, but it gave me the opportunity to appreciate the view more. It was only the second time that I went up the road through Capital Hill and it was really a stunning view. Riding the UTV made it an altogether different experience."

Their first stop was a bamboo grove—quite an experience for first-timers who always marvel at the cathedral-like canopy overhead and the serene silence that is only broken by the intermittent call of birds and the chirp of hidden insects.

"Our guide told us about the historic significance of that area and how it played a role during the war," said Frauleine. "What piqued my interest more was the old organ/keyboard that got lodged in one of the clumps of bamboos and it made me wonder about the rich history of that place.

The way to the top usually goes through muddy paths and trails with potholes full of water. "That made the ride more exciting because we were all splashed with mud! I guess riding the UTV is not complete without getting a little (or a lot) dirty. Good thing there are washing machines in the Let's Go office.

"The ride to the top was a fun journey. The UTV creates an in-your-face experience of nature because of its open features. The wind blowing in your face combined with the relaxing view of the ocean is amazing and the 360-degree view on top of Mt. Tapochao is breathtaking.

"On my first night on the island, people told me not to be in a hurry to see much of it right away. But I'm glad I did not let that UTV ride pass me by."

Safety first

Customers' safety is Let's Go's top priority: Everyone who rides the UTVs, whether a guide or tourist, must wear helmets, goggles, and seatbelts. The vehicles also have row bars for additional safety.

"We have experienced and well-versed tour guides. Everything here is about safety. We have a classroom where we require them to watch a video before riding. The company promotes safety," said Arriola.

Let's Go! is open daily and makes three trips in one day. The most popular choice is the one-hour tour that costs a local discounted rate of $68. They offer a Central and Southern island, and Mt. Tapochao/Hidden Forest tours.

Arriola advised that anyone who will ride their UTVs should wear comfortable clothing like shorts and shirt, with shoes. They must also be prepared to get wet and be splashed by mud since some of the areas they will visit are hidden trails.

Tourists will get the chance to explore never-before-seen trails around Mt. Tapochao like the Bamboo and Hidden forests, Sabana also known as Sound of Music, Jeffrey's Beach, Kokonutville, and Tony Camacho's serene private farm in the Central Island and Mt. Tapochao Tour.

The Southern Island Tour is the ultimate Saipan exploration where you will visit another side of the island's forests and drive through the beaches at Ladder, Obyan, Naftan, Lao Lao Bay, and Forbidden Island.

Arriola and the rest of the Let's Go! staff are always on the lookout for new places and new trails that could be explored, like a small waterfall in the Talofofo area where you need to do a little bit of hiking.

"We are always trying to find new places to share with our passengers but the ultimate factor of selecting a new trail is how safe it is for our vehicles to access the area," said Arriola.

"Other factors are the distance, road quality, private or public land, and we always adhere to zoning regulations in any new area we want to showcase," he said.

The Bamboo Forrest will give tourists some quiet time after the thrilling ride. **TOP LEFT:** Let's Go! guide Luis Camacho gives some safety instructions to Jon Perez before going out to the trail. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Camacho parks the Polaris UTV on Mt. Tapochao.

victoria chentsova's last hurrah

ROSELYN MONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

The end has come for Victoria Chentsova and she wishes to go out with a bang.

The Saipan Swim Club member will be competing in the South Pacific Games in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and 16th FINA World Championships in Kazan, Russia, this month, representing the CNMI probably for the last time before she leaves Saipan to pursue a college degree.

"There definitely is pressure, not only because I'm an ambassador for the CNMI in the swimming world, but also because these may be my last big meets," Chentsova said when asked how she approaches the last two competitions awaiting her.

"I really want to leave these competitions feeling like I left everything in the pool. I want the people here in the CNMI to see how I, along with all the other members of the team, both in swimming and other sports, perform, and hopefully gain some publicity for Northern Marianas Sports Association/ CNMI sports. We are all working hard, so I know that if I give 100 percent in practice, I'll perform to 100 percent of my ability in the meets. That's the goal, to know I did my best and have no regrets," she added.

Chentsova is seeking a fitting finale to her nearly 10 years of representing SSC and the CNMI and adding glitter to a swimming career that saw her compete in four world championships (in Shanghai, Dubai, Doha, and Barcelona), two Micronesian Games (in Palau and Pohnpei), a couple of tournaments in Hawaii and Australia, and seven Guam meets. She repeatedly shattered her personal best times in the world championships and won three gold medals and one bronze in the Micro Games in Pohnpei last year.

On top of these accomplishments are two age group records, which she earned in her last season with SSC. Chentsova timed in at 19:43.16 in the 1,500m freestyle event during

the 2015 SSC International Invitational Swim Meet on March 13, breaking the 12-year mark of another SSC swimmer and now club coach, Tamiko Winkfield (19:54:00/Jan. 10, 2003). Then on March 14, she made it to the CNMI record books again after clocking in at 42.51 seconds in the 50m breaststroke race and crushing the 42.62 seconds Daime Rivera of Tsunami Saipan logged on Dec. 13, 2014.

Both marks in the girls 17 to 18 age group came as a surprise.

"I honestly was not thinking about records at all. I mean, of course I've always wanted to break one, but somehow this meet I was focusing on myself, on beating my times. I was super excited and surprised when I heard that I broke the 1,500m freestyle record, because that is one of my main events and a record that I always wanted to beat. The 50m breaststroke was also unexpected, even more than the 1,500 (which I had been training to perform well in). It's pretty funny because I went into that race just for fun. Everyone knows I'm not a big fan of breaststroke or sprinting," Chentsova said.

Looking back

Being in her last season with SSC, Chentsova can't help but look back at how she got into swimming.

"I'm not 100 percent sure when I started, but I think I was 7 or 8. My joining the team was all thanks to my mom. She isn't a strong swimmer, and she was worried about me, so she sent me to take some swimming lessons. I was naturally comfortable in the water, so swimming stuck. I was excited to swim, but there were definitely times at the beginning where I was unmotivated, especially when I first started to actually train for speed and technique, not just basic swimming," the 17-year-old said.

"But after getting over the initial laziness, I became engrossed in swimming. Especially after my first meets, I loved getting ribbons for my events. The color of the ribbon didn't even matter to me, haha. My first meet in Guam was the real turning point. After that I realized how far swimming could take me," she added.

Like any student-athletes finding it difficult to divide time between school and sports, Chentsova also thought of quitting swimming.

"Oh, quitting swimming came across my mind a few times, no doubt about that. It's really hard, not just for swimmers, but any athlete. It's not just training that takes time; it's tiring and it becomes hard to study and do work after practice. But every time I would even think about it, I would get to the pool, and realize that I love swimming and the benefits it gives me. I honestly feel like it only makes me stronger, both physically and academically," said Chentsova, who graduated salutatorian at Saipan International School in May.

Not pulling the plug also brought her valuable experiences and memories from off-island competitions.

"Perhaps the most treasured would either

be Shanghai world champs (2011) or Barcelona (2013). Shanghai because it was the first world championship I went to, and I got to see behind the scenes the world of a professional swimmer. I was so nervous and overwhelmed at first, but it was a great experience, and I'll never forget it. Barcelona is more personal. The city was beautiful, the games were excellently organized, and I made many friends from both the city and from around the world. I performed well in Barcelona, and watched my teammates perform well too. Not only did we represent the CNMI super well, we learned about the local culture too."

Moving forward

Once she is done with her CNMI national swimming team obligations, Chentsova is going to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

"I'm not exactly sure what I want to do, but I'm leaning toward the medical field, human rights activism, or maybe something in political science. I want to explore a bit before I really decide what I am going to do," she said.

"As for swimming, I know it'll be a challenge, but I definitely want to continue. My school does have a swim team, and I've already began to contact that team and ask how people can get on. I'm hoping I'll be able to swim for the school, but if not I will swim just for myself at a fitness center or something along those lines," the CNMI athlete added.

When Chentsova is over competing in PNG and Russia, she will be saying goodbye to a bunch of young swimmers who look up to her, so she wants to leave them with encouraging words.

"Like Dory from *Finding Nemo* said, 'just keep swimming.' Seriously! It gets tough and you won't improve every meet, but if you give 100 percent in practice, you will perform 100 percent your best. Stick to it. It takes time but you'll get there. And, perhaps most importantly, make sure you have a positive attitude and enjoy swimming. Yeah, there is pain and tiredness, but you need to tune into your good emotions. The best swims, and actually memories in life, happen when you have a positive and focused mood."

where soccer truly is religion

KEVIN BAXTER
Los Angeles Times

The Clericus Cup rule book is the Bible of soccer at the Vatican. And just like that other Good Book, it contains certain commandments.

The first commandment is thou shalt not foul an opponent who has a free path to the goal. Disobey and the punishment is not a red or yellow card but a blue one that leads to soccer's version of purgatory: a five-minute trip to the sidelines for spiritual reflection.

"I have only heard about the blue card," said Lewi Barakat, an Australian seminary student who has not sinned in three previous Vatican soccer tournaments. "I never saw it used."

But Barakat, like the more than 350 priests, deacons and seminarians from the Vatican who play in the annual event, has faith the blue card exists. And at the Vatican, faith—and soccer—are both considered essential. Just ask the guy in charge.

"It's beautiful when a parish has a sports club. Something is missing without one," said Pope Francis, a dues-paying member of the supporters group for Argentine soccer team San Lorenzo—which, not insignificantly, was named after a saint.

The pope doesn't have a favorite among the 16 teams that kicked off in March for the two-month-long event in the ninth edition of the Clericus Cup, the soccer tournament that takes its name from the Latin word for clergy. But that doesn't mean he won't be watching. Because in less than a decade the annual intercollegiate competition among Rome's Pontifical seminaries has grown from a series of intramural scrimmages into a regulation 11-on-11 tournament that has drawn attention from FIFA, the sport's world governing body, and praise from UEFA, European soccer's ruling organization.

"It's bigger than I ever thought it would be," said Scott Gratton, a former teammate of Barakat's on the North American Martyrs, the U.S. seminary team that has won two of the last three Clericus Cup titles. "It literally is like the World Cup to us."

And though the competition remains limited to priests or those studying for the

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Players of Verbo Incarnato team hold a banner reading "Up With the Pope" prior to the start of their Clericus Cup soccer match against the Redemptoris Mater team, in Rome, Sunday, March 17, 2013. In background is the dome of St. Peter's Basilica.

priesthood, it draws players—including some former pros—from more than 60 countries, most of them African or South American.

"It's no walk in the park," said Barakat, 30, who was a top-flight amateur player in Sydney. "The Clericus Cup deserves to be taken with some seriousness and played competitively."

It's not the highest level of soccer played in the Vatican, though. Vatican City, the world's smallest country, also has an international team composed primarily of the Swiss Guard and other staffers, making the Vatican one of only nine recognized sovereign states whose national team is not a FIFA member. Another is tiny Monaco, which beat Vatican City, 2-0, in its most recent game last May.

But whatever the Clericus Cup lacks in talent it more than makes up for in passion. Teams in the tournament have their own supporter groups, composed mainly of other seminarians, who have unique chants for both their teams and individual players. Holy Martyrs—whose uniforms are a patriotic blend of red, white and blue—may have the most impassioned fans, some of whom have shown up costumed as Super Mario, Spider-Man, Uncle Sam and Captain America while waving American flags.

Some have even come dressed as priests.

"The atmosphere the fans produce is impressive," Barakat said. "They make noise from start to finish."

Sometimes too much noise. In the tournament's early years, supporters brought drums, tambourines, megaphones and boomboxes that played reggae music at ear-splitting levels. Neighbors complained, and though the Vatican didn't institute a vow of silence, it did ask the seminarians to turn down the volume.

The seeds for the tournament were planted in 2003 by Jim Mulligan, a seminarian at England's College in Rome who organized an eight-team "friendly" event called the Rome Cup. But the idea didn't win the Vatican's blessing until four years later. That's when the church's No. 2 official, Cardinal Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone, a fan of Italian club Juventus and a soccer commentator during his time as Archbishop of Genoa, doubled the number of teams and modeled the tournament after the World Cup, adding group play and a knockout round.

The tournament is played on a hilltop within Vatican City at Columbus Pius XI Field, an artificial-turf venue with a tiny grandstand and a breathtaking image of St. Peter's Basilica, which fills the view between the two team benches.

The RedMats of Redemptoris Mater are the most successful team in the tournament, having won three of the first four titles, all by 1-0 scores. Last year they lost by that same score to the African Lions of Collegio Urbano, whose players—with the exception of one Indian and one Indonesian—all came from Africa.

The players bless themselves before taking the field, where both teams meet at the center circle for a pregame prayer. There are no requests for favorable results, though, because the tournament is more about camaraderie and personal growth than it is about winning.

"One of the satisfying aspects of playing for our seminary is seeing how the players come together as a team and how that bond strengthens throughout the tournament," Barakat said.

"More than any other competition I have played in, the players look for the balance of playing hard but fair. There is something greater that the players are striving for that goes beyond the Clericus Cup."

Sometimes the physical and the spiritual worlds collide, which is why the North American Martyrs will once again be without Gratton. The high-scoring forward sustained a knee injury and hasn't played since helping his team to its second straight title in 2013—making the Clericus Cup one of the few international soccer events that has been dominated by North Americans.

"He wants to be able to genuflect when he is a priest one day," Barakat said of Gratton. "So he decided to retire early for a greater good."

JON SAKOVICH

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

Olympian and The Bolles School aquatic director Jonathan "Jon" Sakovich didn't join the CNMI's Little League Baseball program because he didn't want to spend a lot of time sitting in the dugout.

As a hyperactive kid growing up in this little dot in the middle of Pacific, swimming was simply the default sport for the now 44-year-old son of NMSA Hall of Famers Bill and Jean Sakovich.

"I got into swimming because there was not much else on Saipan. There was Little League Baseball, but that whole hand-eye coordination thing was not my cup of tea and the fact you did a lot of sitting around. I was and still am fairly hyperactive. I do not sit still very well, so swimming with the constant movement was great for me," Sakovich told TAGA *Sports*.

It also helped that Sakovich's parents are the founders and coaches of the CNMI's iconic Saipan Swim Club.

"My parents were also the swim coaches so what else do you think their kids were go-

ing to do? But don't get me wrong, I enjoyed swimming and do not for one moment ever look back and wish I could have done another sport. I loved being in the water and still do to this day, just not always swimming laps. Swimming for me was a way to 'see what was out there in the world,'" he said.

Sakovich admits it wasn't always smooth sailing being coached by his own parents.

"Swimming for my parents was just that, swimming for my parents. I was a typical kid that rebelled at times and went through phases where my parents 'were not cool' and there was no way in heck anything they said was 'right.'"

He concedes now that without his parents' guidance in and out of the pool, he wouldn't be the person he is now—a multi-medalist in the Pacific Games and Micronesian Games, a seven-time All-American at the University of Florida, a member of the 1997 U.S. Pan American Games swimming team, and a member of the Guam national swimming team in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.

"Now I can look back and tell you without a doubt that, without them being the parents they were and the coaches they were, I would never have become the person I am and I really like the person I am. When I say this, I am not saying this in an egotistical way and that I think I am all that. I say it with great pride and humility and am extremely proud of the way my parents raised me, coached me, and dealt with me. I know I frustrated them many times and was a major pain in the butt at times, but they taught me well and looking back I can definitely say they are Hall of Famer parents and coaches!"

Sakovich believes the sport also played a big part in making their family close not only when he and his younger sister Anneka were growing up but until today—something he tries to emulates with his own family.

"Looking back I also realized that without my parents being the swim coaches and me and my sister swimmers, we would not have spent as much time together as a family as we could have. Having kids of my own, I enjoy the fact that I am a swim coach and all my kids swim and I get to see them more than many other families get to see their kids!"

Olympic experience

While he is not the only athlete from the CNMI who has competed in the Olympics—former Saipan resident William "Bill" Tavares represented the U.S. in the luge in the Winter Olympics in the 1990s—Sakovich is still proud that he somehow represented the islands in the quadrennial event.

"I feel very fortunate and lucky at the same time to have been able to represent Guam and the CNMI at the Olympics. It was a very strange situation in which the CNMI was not granted a charter to the International Olympic Committee for participation in the 1988 Olympic Games and I happened to be living

[in] Guam at that time. I was able to qualify for the Guam Olympic team and for that I am very grateful!"

Sakovich, who went to high school in Guam, admitted, though, that even though he wore the Guam flag and represented the U.S. territory in the Seoul Olympics, he still felt like he was representing the CNMI as well.

"It was definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience and one that will never be forgotten! The only thing that would have made it better would have been to have the CNMI flag at the Olympics with me."

Sakovich said there is no secret to becoming an Olympian, as it involves a lot of hard work, dedication, and focus on a long-term basis, with just a pinch of luck thrown in.

"It is not something you wake up one day and say to yourself, 'I think I am going to make the Olympic team today.' It does not work that way. Many of these athletes have worked for years and sacrificed jobs, family, friends, and their lives for the opportunity to represent their country at the Olympics. Only a few are selected and many of these athletes never make it to the Olympics. In swimming I have seen world record-holders, the best of the best, not make their respective Olympic teams. This is where the luck comes in. You have to be on top of your game on qualification day and if one little thing goes wrong, you could be watching the Olympics on TV with everyone else. So, there is no secret—just plain old-fashioned hard work!"

Aside from the 1988 Olympics, Sakovich

lists his stints in the 1995 Pan American Games and 1995 Pan Pacific Championships as the most memorable in his swimming career.

"Taking the Olympics out of the equation, I would have to say representing Team USA at the 1995 Pan Am Games and 1995 Pan Pacific Championships along with being a USA swimming national champion both in the pool (200meter freestyle and 400meter freestyle) and in open water (15 kilometer) swimming are the pinnacle of my swimming career. I think placing fifth at NCAA swimming championships for the University of Florida was pretty cool, too! But the Olympics will always be the most memorable!" he said.

Missing island life

Sakovich, who now calls Jacksonville, Florida home, said nothing beats growing up on Saipan and admits that he continues to reminisce his formative years here.

"Growing up on Saipan was great. I can't compare it to growing up anywhere else because Saipan is all I know and that is all that matters. I loved my life there growing up and would not change it for anything."

Just some of the things he misses about island life are the clear ocean water—that you can see all the way to the bottom—countless fiestas for all the Catholic churches and saints, not driving longer than 10 to 15 minutes to get anywhere, as well as red rice, *finadene* sauce, *kelaguen*, and coconut crabs.

"I would love to come back to Saipan and bring my family for an extended visit to show them where I grew up. I think Saipan and even Guam are amazing places and, when given the opportunity, people need to visit! Plus the history of Saipan is amazing!"

When not busy serving as the aquatic director of the Bolles School, Sakovich just hangs out with his family, works out at the gym, and coaches his sons' flag football team.

"For the first time ever I am coaching my sons' flag football team, the 'Coconut Crabs,' I even gave all our plays an island theme for names, like the 'palm tree' the 'rolling coconut,' 'attacking crab,' etc. I try to read and keep up to date on swimming and the world of swimming. Other than that, I do not think there is much more time for anything else. I am pretty busy with the coaching and running the Bolles swim program," he said.

When asked what tips he can share with aspiring swimmers out there, Sakovich only had one word: Passion.

"Have a passion for what you do. Too many people in this world do things because they feel they have to and hate what they do. You will never be as successful at anything unless you have a passion for it! Also work hard and don't be afraid to fail. Without failure there is no learning, without learning there is no success. We need to learn about our discipline of choice. If we don't, someone is going to outlearn you and beat you!"

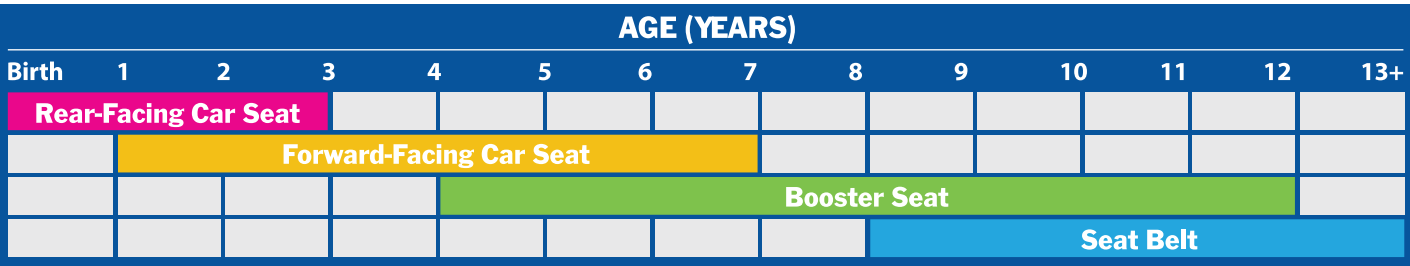
Car crashes are a leading cause of death for children 1 to 13 years old. Many times deaths and injuries can be prevented by proper use of car seats, boosters, and seat belts.

Child Passenger Safety Week

September 13 - 19, 2015

There are many car seat choices on the market. Use the information below to help you choose the type of car seat that best meets your child's needs.

- Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions (check height and weight limits) and read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or lower anchors and a tether, if available.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child inthe back seat at least through age 12.



REAR-FACING CAR SEAT

Birth – 12 Months
Your child under age 1 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats:

- Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing.
- Convertible and All-in-one car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.

1 – 3 Years
Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether.

FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT

1 – 3 Years
Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether.

4 – 7 Years
Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

BOOSTER SEAT

4 – 7 Years
Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

8 – 12 Years
Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it's safer there.

SEAT BELT

8 – 12 Years
Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it's safer there.

Car Seat Inspection Stations are located at:

DPS-Highway Safety Office • DPS Traffic Section • Garapan Fire Station
Koblerville Fire Station • Kagman Fire Station • Tinian Traffic Section • Rota Traffic Section

NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov

CNMI Department of Public Safety. For more information call:

SAIPAN 664-9001/9125 | TINIAN 433-9222/2041 | ROTA 532-9433/9530

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